

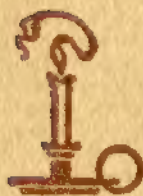
NIGHT LIGHTS

**A COMPILATION OF CLEVELAND
POETRY**

NIGHT LIGHTS

COMPILED BY

ROSALEE R. PHILLIPS



Volume One

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To my husband, Dean Phillips -
for his assistance.

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FOREWORD

Because as the editor of a column receptive to contributed verse I have read so much of the output of local poets, I have been asked to write a few words of introduction for this collection of a limited number of Cleveland poems. I do this without prejudice and without flattery; I have no axe to grind, no favorites to boost. And, to speak frankly, I consider the contents of this volume to be of unequal merit; there are some remarkable things in it, and some things that I, myself would have omitted if I had been the editor.

Just the same, it is a book worth printing, for there is some real poetry in it, some mature work, much that exhibits great promise. We have in Cleveland an extraordinarily large number of poets who are doing fine work, and a half-dozen of these are included here. Several of these are new to me; with the work of two or three of the others, I am already well acquainted. I wish that more such anthologies might be made; it is difficult to find media for the expression of much of our most meritorious lyric output, and any legitimate way of getting it before the public is to be commended and encouraged. I bespeak for these poems the attention of all local poetry lovers.

Ted Robinson

LOVE CAME CALLING

Fleet came Love, all fresh and fair,
Roses twisted in her hair;
Dropped the petals one by one,
Spread a drowsy, fragrant air
Where she passed; and fleet was gone,
Left the petals lying there.
Fleet went Love, still fresh and fair,
Plucking roses for her hair.

Roland A. Browne

THE LAKE FROM THE HOLLENDEN ROOF

This November morning at dawn, you are

a turbulent rhythm

of form and of color,

The background for proud, new buildings, virginal white,

untouched for a brief moment

by the grime of the City.

Hundreds of years will pass, and these proud, white buildings

will bow to the passing of time

and the rush of Modernity.

While you will continue to hold your place in Creation,

an imperishable rhythm

of form and of color.

Donald Bachart

L'AMOUR D'ADRIENNE
[after Charles Baudelaire]

When I behold thee, O my indolent love,
To the sound of ringing brazen melodies,
Through garish halls harmoniously move,
Scattering a scornful light from languid eyes.

When I see, smitten by the blazing lights,
Thy pale face, beauteous in its bloodless glow
As the faint fires that deck the northern nights,
And eyes that draw me wheresoever I go.

I say, She is fair, too coldly strange for speech,
A crown of memories; her calm brow above
Shines, and her heart is like a bruised red peach,
Ripe as her body for intelligent love.

Art thou late fruit of spicy savor and scent?
A funeral vase awaiting tearful showers?
An eastern odor, waste and oasis blent?
A silken cushion or a bank of flowers?

I know there are eyes of melancholy sheen,
To which no passionate secrets e'er were given,
Shrines where no God or saint has ever been,
As deep and empty as the vault of Heaven.

But what care I if this be all pretense?
'Twill serve a heart that seeks for truth no more,
All one, thy folly or indifference...
Hail, lovely mask, thy beauty I adore.

Donald Bachart

ACHIEVEMENT

Behind a curtain designed by Earl Carroll,
You seemed a being from another sphere.....

A glorious houri dancing in the wind.....

The soul of Beauty...unattainable.....

How little did I know that ere the dawn

Had passed into Eternity almost,

I should dwell within your same small world,

In the limited sense of buying your prunes and toast.

Donald Bachart

IT WAS SO LONG AGO

It was so long ago;

I remember it so clearly,

There were hours of supreme bliss....

That are to be treasured dearly....

I haven't forgotten that first kiss.

It was so long ago;

Strains from an organ near by

Are sad, and yet the melody brings to me

Thoughts of love that could never die,

Why did the end have to be?

It was so long ago;

But need it be always that way?

I seem to be bound in chains --

The price for love that one has to pay.

Just what is it that remains?

Charlet Barnes

FLIGHT

Culture may plump and deviously guild
A berry that tastes sweeter in the wild.
Gull on the wing may wheel and soar and dive,
But a caged gull will languish, though it live.

Fettered precision of the printed word
Is the dulled edge of a conqueror's sword.
Plunged springmaddened in the sun and wind,
There is no leash to tame the racing mind.

Barbara Bradley

RETREAT

Listen to the sobs in the dark before dawn.
Listen to the steps brisk and short,
To the crisply starched rustle of skirt
Which pauses at doorways to peep
To see that you sleep.

Listen to cries that arise, and are gone,
Stifled and brief, from the court
Where methods are modern, alert.
There the steps quicken and leap
To put them to sleep.

The clockbells are silenced out on the lawn.
Nightwakers never report
A counting of chimes. But the hurt
In those women who weep
Perforce forbids sleep.

Barbara Bradley

FINNEGAN'S PICNIC

Cumbs, itcometh

Slow to the licky fire.

(Low bright hot firespokes in seawind.)

To the dungarpanted pigheap.

Peaheavy, sleepappy peopies

Sproddled in cholly dork sonds,

Sloooow comes a fingerthin figure,

Spectereyes seakin.

(Salmonmoon stardown,

Face of a faceless dame, pinkalframed.)

Who is it? Man is it? You it is,

Me seeking.

Yetchua dead as the sea-age past,

Day mortchuy kneel ni ci bon'm

Ye canna find me, hear.

You. You. You. You.

In the mildsurf wavecrash.

In charcoal threaded shrimpcrawl sands.

(Lilycups lilycups sandwiches oranges

Bananas in the basket, in mentibus bananas.)

No need to yoohoo, You. You dominote

Lewdlaff loudlaugh ho ho ho.

Hee . hee Martini

Ho ho holdfashioned

Chugfulla rum Ahrum! Aaahhhrummm!

(Nebulous nimbus westerly oriflamme,
Verdigreen mooncloud, bittery nightwind.
Sweatercoats, shoeson, lipstick and huddle.)
You in you frail you starsprinkle you.

Solosong, chorusong,

Choruslow, hyasweet.

Darkheapit pigglepiles

Chuchutant, shush shush sshhh.

Blankets and bodies, snugwarmy and cosle.

Me, iam compy and saphe
Save for a feastghost fireflicker wanderer,
Sadsea king, seeking.

Barbara Bradley

IF I HAD TEARS

If I had tears to spend
Would they be squandered now,
Rainlike and prodigal,
Upon the world's fresh graves -
Poured out on fresh-turned sod
Made ready for the planting of a fruited crop,
Now to receive instead the bodies,
All unripe for earth,
Of them that planted?
Or would my tears baptise as at a font
The innocents of nations?
The recent-born, or yet unborn
For whom a world is passing?
Or would I pour the salt vials of my grief
Upon the hopes
That rose up in fields of man's imagination
Like yellow grain, drenched in sunlight,
Blighted now, before the time of harvest -
Cut down by an unlicensed Reaper?
Or would I husband up my tears with jealous care
Lest I have greater need of them tomorrow?

Marietta R. Clarke

FRUSTRATION

I am alone.

Passionate kisses,

And tender sighs are not for me.

The barren desert

Loves the frigid sky

More than I love anything.

I loved once.

Passionately.....

But that is dead---

Long dead!

Now I am a bleak, cold stone,

Hanging from the neck of time.

I am alone.

Beatrice Duff

THEY SHALL NOT PASS

The earth
echoes the ageless
sound of tramping feet.

A cry,
"They shall not pass!"
A silence,
Then the hollow
mocking sounds
of tramping feet
begin again.

Beatrice Duff

PRAYER

I stood alone

In silent cry.

Why am I?

If perhaps trees feel no pain

Then the seed that gave me sky

Was rain!

And I shall grow

And yet not know.

Could I be wind and

Feel no pain?

Or sun -

And know not heat?

I am of the earth

I walk upon.

I speak for those beneath my feet -

Who have yet to come.

I have a friend and home

And yet I walk alone.

Arnold Francis Gates
(reprinted)

QUEST OF JOHNNY APPLESEED

I have found magic in a seed.
For I have planted
Them in wild soil.
And they grew,
And threw
Forth new life
In shape of trees,
Overhung with deep green leaves.
And beneath their bowers,
Low with fruit,
I have found
They struck the dismal monotony
Of wilderness with scented blossoms.
I made the lonely frontier cabin HOME.
Upon a vast sea of trees
I put the foam.
I brought a sun to dreary skies,
I showed them beauty -

And taught them where it lies.
And yet, I but planted seeds.
Savages have partaken
Of my fruit
And flung away the core
Which took root and gave them more.
Some called me fool.
Why?

I only planted seeds!
And those with greeds
Called me slave.
But I forgive all men.
For I shall be repaid many fold
When blossoms shower
Upon my grave.

And dust of me shall warm the seeds
That in their time be apple trees.

Arnold Francis Gates
(reprinted)

CINEMA

All the world's a silent screen, and Man's a
Strutting ghost in Fate's extravaganza;
Granted power of speech, his pale reflection
Mirrors faintly some Supreme Direction.

Harry Goldberger
(The Jingler)

(reprinted)

REFLECTION ON THE MODERNISTIC SCHOOL OF POETRY

Free verse

Might be worse.

[Well, now -

Just how?]

Harry Goldberger

(The Jingler)

reprinted

TOO GAY

Three little maids from school were they.

Who believed in that poem of Edna Millay;

They knew how to pet

And how to go-get, and by candle light,

How to make hey, hey, hey!

Harry Goldberger

(The Jingler)

reprinted

PREMONITION

There is a feeling of earth shifting;
of winds sweeping
from unsuspected savage peaks.

Things loved are changing;
The familiar countenance must undergo violence;
blind sockets where once
eyes beheld sunlight.

Ruth Grunauer

1932

The earth lies cold about,
And the brightness of the day
Is clouded with the gray
Of misery.
The voices of the people,
Crying; cursing;
Crying loud for bread,
Cursing the God that made them so,
Fill the thirsty chasms of the street
And echo to the towering spires above,
Towers that, reaching to the sky,
Turn back to point to man,
Not God.

Frank Hale

A CHILD'S GARDEN OF LOUSY VERSE

Now it's most amazing to relate
This story of a pickled date;
Of how, from bad to worse it went,
Until its youth had been quite spent.

It all began upon a foggy night,
The date fared forth without a light
To call upon his lady love, a prune,
And it befell most wonderous soon,
That he passed by a bad saloon.
And from its doors there echoed forth
A barroom ditty most, most coarthe.
Now to our hero this was so new
He quite forgot his rendezvous,
And through the swinging doors he made his way,
Oh, young date, stay, Oh stay away,
But through those portals he did essay,
And therein gave his soul away.
Upon his lips there was a sneer
As he ordered up a glass of beer.

He drank it down, and then another,
(Heaven spare his poor mother.)
By now he was so very tight
They tossed him out into the night,
And in the street he lay, a drunkard now,
Shunned by all; by you or me, I trow,
And so the moral is, my friends,
If you would not come to bad ends
Shun the beer, it's made with hops,
And stick, I pray you, to lollipops.

Frank Hale

RETORT TO A CRITIC

Though my meter should be dated
And my verse a thing of scorn.
Remember I was never sated
With the heart of muse, fresh torn.

Frank Hale

TESTAMENT

Life was a day in spring
When the wind had lost its sting,
And flowers everywhere
Sent perfumes through the air,
But now that night is near
Each of my joys I'll share.

To poets I bequeath
The field and purple heath;
To sailors on the sea,
A strong wind on the lea;
To youth, and all its dreams,
A life that is full and free.

To children in their play
I leave the glad some day,
To lovers and their sighs
I leave the starlite skies,
And to each tiny babe
A mothers' lullabies.

Frank Hale

LAMENT

Shadows 'in the moonlight
That cross my bed, and then
Are only shadows that
A mocking moon has sent.
Oh! laughing, derisive moon,
Why do you plague me with beams
That carry only phantoms and dreams
That cannot be?

Out my window there is only
A sky of flickering lights above
A city that is dull and gray
And dreary in its pallor.
For, though the stars,
They dance so blithly,
Still their beauty cannot really
Fill my heart as once they did,
Nor the moon be half so lovely
As when your head was on my pillow,
And your love, so full and vibrant,
Sought my heart and found it full
Of nought but love for you.

Frank Hale

FROM CHATEAU LAKE LOUISE

My heart has scaled the mountains,
My heart has scoured the plains,
My heart has gone philandering
Along the country lanes:

But never in its wanderings,
In any of its tours,
Has my heart found another heart
As deep and dear as yours.

Della Harding

ARIADNE ON NAXOS

She has the look which Ariadne wore
Deserted upon Naxos.. Her sad gaze
Is fixed upon the sea. For days and days
That sea has shown no sail to one ashore -
A sea which, while she slept, secretly bore
Her Theseus from her... Theseus, beyond praise,
Brave, but proved how false! No longer blaze
The fires of love or rage.. She weeps no more.
Upon her loveliness a stillness lies.

It is not death, though death were kinder far,
It is not sleep... Her soul's become a star -
Apart and shining... Ariadne's crown,
All prematurely cast into the skies,
Upon her desolation gazes down.

Della Harding

ECHO

My love for you is like a voice
Echoing in an empty room;
Only the walls give answer,
Like the private thunder of my heart.

Alan Harvey

ONE PLUS FOUR EQUALS NOTHING

I saw four fires in a field,
I made four friends who would not yield;
I saw the ash when the fires died.
I saw a face that was four times tried.
I saw four trees on a level plain,
I had four loves, and thought to gain.
I made four slashes in the bark;
I made four wounds that left a mark.
I saw a ship, a town, a train,
But I never had four friends again.

Alan Harvey

STRANGE BROTHER

Oh lovely Brother, do you hear my heart?

(Speak softly, softly. No. He will not hear

The clamouring heart.)

Oh gentle Brother, do you see my eyes?

(Look far, look far away. He does not see

The wondering eyes.)

Oh laughing Brother, will you kiss my lips?

(Close fast, close firm and cool. He will not kiss

The trembling lips.)

Oh friendly Brother, do you feel my hands?

(Clasp firm. Clasp warmly. Lest perhaps he touch

The betraying hands.)

Alan Harvey

FIRE IN THE HEART

We 'stood still and motionless at parting,
There were no tears, and no sad cry ----
"Goodbye," you said, "Forget me."
"There's nothing to do," I said, "But try."

Now years pass swift and love is dead,
There is no flame, only a coal ----
"You fool," it says, "Forget me."
"It's no use, I can't," returns the soul.

We stood strained and eager at reunion,
The coal kindled -- a flame sprang high ---
"My love," you said, "Remember ---"
"I never forgot you, dear," said I.

Shirley Henn

YOU

I was listening quietly to him
And he said,
"Think of your greatest love;"
And I saw
You, with your curious knowing look,
Reading my heart like an open book.

I was thinking sadly of you,
And he said,
"Think of your greatest hate;"
And I felt
The sting of your words that pierced me through,
And all I had left was hate for you.

Shirley Henn

A LA NASH

Big girls who go out to dine
With any and every papa,
Should be spanked and sent to bed
Without a bite of soppa.

Frank Lee

MAIL

The letters you don't write to me
Are the ones I look for constantly.

Frank Lee

SONG FOR SUNNY DAYS

Books and magazines and such
Never thrill me very much,
All the knowledge I need lies
In the darkness of your eyes.
Of all the gladness I find, half
Is in your smile, half in your laugh.
Romance may be found in books
If read by two in cozy nooks:
Close-up pictures in magazines
Are never as good as our love scenes.
I'll save my printed thrills for when
I'm much too old to have a yen.

Frank Lee

PUN ON PUNS

A buck is a hare,
A buck is a deer,
A buck is a negro,
Or a bucket of beer,

A buck is a stop sign
When the buck's an ass,
Or a buck may be
Just something to pass.

But the greatest buck
Is the one in your pucket
When there's no buck there
And you grin and buck it.

Frank Lee

ETERNITY

Cool breeze encircling my tired body
Through an endless, starless night,
Cool breezes where your arms were,
Where your lips were,
Where you were.

I hate to think of this same night
Encircling you, - alone.

Frank Leo

STENOGRAPHER

Life strangled her slowly
With a typewriter ribbon,
While time totaled her gasps
On an adding machine.
Death entered her as a new account;
Now worms
Will collect the interest.

Joseph Longo

TO EINSTEIN

You ingenious trapper of light,
And labeler of stars:
You formulator of gaseous nebulae,
And great hunter of time not yet recorded
How is it that SHE has eluded
Your most intricate of traps?

Joseph Longo

IN THE SHAKESPEARE GARDENS

You follow down a vista's green
To find his marble bust,
Where colonnade and curving stair
Commemorate his dust.

Each common blade of grass is bright
Against the hallowed ground.
Proximity to Shakespeare's head
Makes ants become profound.

A mulberry goes slanting up.
A legend reads in stone
That this is scion of the tree
That once was Shakespeare's own.

A cardinal in cap of state,
A swing in maple gold,
Pronounces something a propos
In notes alert and bold.

The bleeding hearts are hanging here
With violet's purple band.
Each tiny blossom's freckled face
His soul would understand.

While passing through the willow's fronds,
And rising from the earth,
Come everlasting characters
His genius brought to birth.

Clara McClean

BETWEEN DANCES

Oh God, how could he say that!

"Sky is pretty, isn't it."

Could he guess how much he hurt me?

"This is a nice place to sit."

Oh my heart, my heart is broken.

"Isn't that a living gray?

Only May skies have that color."

Oh last May, last May, last May!

"I've so much enjoyed the dancing.

Takes me back to long ago

When I used to dance at college."

Oh if he could only know -

What if I should never see him!

"I beg pardon. Did you say - ?

Oh, you like me in this color?"

Jeffery liked me any way.

"Yes, I think it's rather pretty - "

Will he ever come again?

"I give little thought to dresses.

You observe more than most men."

I wore blue when first he kissed me.

Dear God, let us meet by chance!

"Once I had a pretty blue dress - "

"So have I enjoyed the dance."

Evelyn Emig Mellon

LAST LULLABY

The little crib had grown so small
As he stretched out with growing limb,
I think the one where now he lies
Can't seem so very strange to him.

His hands, that sought its latticed bars
With small pink fingers, folded now.
Must find the sides of this new bed
Placed scarcely closer to his brow.

Only he can't peer out above
These wooden sides, this final rack,
And how can he be quite at rest
Who never slept upon his back?

Evelyn Emig Mellon

LOVE

I love Franz Schubert's "Serenade,"

And midnight snacks -

And witty cracks -

And beauty packs -

And railroad tracks -

And landlord bills

Marked "Paid."

Charles Morton

INVOCATION TO LOVE

Oh, come quickly - quickly
To the bough, and burst my heart
With fragrance of your bloom:
I, abstemious mortal that I be,
Had thought to hoard
The silvered moon: the stars,
The breath of morning sun -
Until that day (long spent, alas)
I chose to draw my treasures
One by one...
Come quickly....quickly
Kind love, I pray.
Age moves apace
With no uncertain tread,

Charles Morton
(reprinted)

I SHALL LEAVE YOUR HEART

I shall leave your heart...
Being tired of your heart
And its constant laughter,
And I shall walk
The long white road
That lies naked in the moon - drench.

I do not know why starlight
May hold so strange a spell;
Or soften a heart that throbs with hurt.
I only know that laughter,
The pregnant kind
That lies half - hidden,
May be replaced by quiet, running tears
That fall silently,
And build long burning pyres.....

Charles Morton

L'AMOUR MORTE

Ravage my heart -

Scourge my soul -

And as the rain drops fall

Count my tears.

Feel my anguish -

Bear my grief -

And know the never - dying flame

Of my love.

And beauty gone -

And all hope dead -

Kindle the fire with tinder

Of my passion.

Rosalee R. Phillips

SYMPATHY

Bitter your heart as you stand alone.

Left are only shattered dreams
After yesterday's storm has passed.

Nights are endless, dreary times alone.
Cherished hopes vanish, and callous
Hearts stand by and give no heed.
Ever thinking of themselves alone.

Many times I felt it within my soul,-
Envyng not a little-
Reaching for a tangible word to speak
Righteously of what burned my heart.
In this hour of turmoil, my
Love alone can stand beside you.
Lean on it and find it strong.

Rosalee R. Phillips

NIGHT

O Night! you speak
in such a quiet voice,
and yet
the whole world feels
the depth of you.

Of light

You give but sparingly,
but all the world
awaits the stars,
and feels
their splendor given
fully to all
who care to see.

And the shadows

where the moon will never reach
are warm
with many burning dreams.
And all is given
so silently,
I did not hear you come,
nor will I hear you go.
But I shall wait for your return,
O Night!

Rosalee R. Phillips

DAY

O Day! you come so quickly.

You give no time
for dreams or thought.

The sun dazzles
and thinks not
of drooping flowers
or working men.

No body can withstand you -
No mind
can conquer you,
and yet
without you there would be
no life.

You create
such greatness,
and then destroy.
You come in so noisily
your presence
cannot be ignored.

You leave
without a thought
for the morrow,
and though
I need you always,
I am glad to see you go
O Day!

Rosalee R. Phillips

LAKE ERIE

Far on the distant horizon
A blue cloud spread itself lightly
Above the roaring water, capped white, and foamy.
Gray skies frowned, and cold winds swept mercilessly
Great waves against an already troubled shore,
upset by days and days of endless tumult.
Faintly - black smoke passed in review -
Floating listlessly above the drab green waters.
Muddy and brown, a strip of water
Streaks through this gloom.
And above this solemn desolation
I stand and contemplate,-
"How beautiful - even is this gloom!
But if it is so glorious, then surely it no longer
can hold any part of sadness or dread,
but is only a small part of God's everlast-
ing greatness."
And suddenly I find a comforting peace.

Rosalee R. Phillips

SHATTERED HOPE

Why did you hold yourself so far from me last night?
Your arms once so warm,
Reaching out to me
As though they were not complete without me;
Once so anxious for the touch of my flesh;
Ever ready to clasp your own to you:
Once so apt in all their movements;
Accomplishing small things - and big
With the same simple grace:
Once so strong
As you held your love,
Now are cold.
And as they moved seemed
Empty.
Futile.
And pushed me off
With grim and cruel indifference -
Ignoring my very presence.

Rosalee R. Phillips

MANHATTAN

Out of the noise and bustle -

I see your face.

Standing in the half-light

Of a shop sign As the day

Speeds into night.

And a million lights sputter and dazzle,

You were half in obscurity . . .

It was a dark corner . . .

I touched you and you were so ethereal -

A shadow among a thousand other shadows:

A dream obscured by many dreams.

And yet your smile shown brighter

Than all the sparkling lights,

And your touch was warmer than all the buildings inner
warmth.

That one glance held in it all the love of all

the beating hearts of all the passing mob.

Rosalee R. Phillips

I drank deeply of that one fleeting minute.
I clutched at every little breath.
I held closely all you gave me,
And so today I have your all to love -
Your love, your hope, your smile.
And all you meant to me
As we stood in a shadow,
Silhouetted against a city full of us.

Rosalee R. Phillips

QUESTION

It was so delight -
Ful, to have you so spite -
Fully slap me that night.

You ought to be sor -
Ry, although it was glor -
lous to see you so sore.

When you were so kiss -
Able, standing submiss -
lvely, could I resist?

Of course, I was teas -
Ing, but would you be freez -
Ing if now I said "Please?"

May Henry Sedgley
(reprinted)

POETRY

In honeyed words of balm and spice
The poet sings of wonderful things;
And thoughts are given magic wings
In but a trice.

The fluted mass of cloudy skies,
The rainbow's mystic witching fires,
A distant city's gleaming spires -
There beauty lies.

But truest poetry is dumb;
Its beauties live, but unexpressed.
From souls whose speech is crudely dressed
It cannot come - - - -

I saw a workman, swarthy, brown,
With mud-caked shovel, pause and smile
Into the western sky, the while
The sun went down.

May Henry Sedgley
(reprinted)

MUSIC

There is spring in the air, and I bring not a care.
Every flower has its hour in the sun;
And the new grass is sweet, as I pass - - with my feet
Keeping time to the rhyme of the sweet notes that run,
Silver light, in the height of the air.

And I thrill as I stroll up the hill to a knoll
Where the green makes a screen for a nest:
For the note that I heard from the throat of a bird,
Ringing free out to me, from a feathery breast,
Was a strain cool as rain to my soul.

May Henry Sedgley

THE DARKEST HOUR

The darkest hour is just before the dawn;

How black the blackness of that deepening hour
Yet in the void soon shimmers frail and pink

The shell-like petals of the day in flower.
Earth's dusky face awaits in quietness

The cool, pale liquid light that floods the sky;
Beyond the hills there seems a mellowness - -

A promised sunbeam, as the shadows fly.

The filtering dawn brings surcease to my woe;

For soon then too, my darkest hour shall go.

May Henry Sedgley

THE HOURS

Now makes the heart a legend
of her, face.

Now tells the heart itself
sweet tales
of how she smiles,
and how each word she speaks is prayer
or song within the hours.

Now takes the heart unto itself the flowers
of hair, the scent of mouth.

Now shakes the heart in gentle wind
as she does walk
in subtle paths of love.

Now breaks the heart again, again,
with longing for that love.

Jo Sinclair

PLAGUE

Plague the moon with wildest word and gaudiest phrases,
Know that soon, soon the elfin praise of grass
Will not suffice the eye, nor will the lie of woman
Be enough to fill the grandeur of the heart.

Part the curtains of your body's night,
And plague the moon of your desire:
Whatever fire you build or find will light
Your agonies, as candles to a christ
Make bright his own sweet wounds.

Jo Sinclair

SAPPHIC

For the women who wander like ghosts over the oceans of night, ecstatic wounded sorrowing drunken gay brave, and for their ghost and mortified flesh in pain shyness love terror, in pain ;

For the mouths sleeping or waking, kissed or unkissed, silent or with song, or, for the mouths of women tired glorious ugly lovely as a snatch of song, for the mouths gay and hurt unto death !

For the heart and soul of women, and the travesty of these two upon love, for the heart like a fainted bird and the soul like a drugged sweet bird, oh, for the heart and soul of women like candles at blessing in a black night ;

For the women who perish like heroes in each battle of night undying the mouth, untombed the glorious flesh, wonder of heart and soul ;

Let a new world arise .

Jo Sinclair

SAPPHIC II

. . . and this I say. Whatever loneliness there is,
whatever mystery, or secret splendor; lead me by
a star. Feed me by the light of countless moons,
for I am hungry. Sing to me within the bright,
hard day, for I am consumed with the silences, I
am afire with the stillness.

And this I say. This I pray, by every christ or
every myth a man may dream into the world. Give
into the palms of my hands a humility and a beauty
at once. Chalk upon my brow a mark, a secrecy
and knowledge in one, so that the scar is there,
so that the mark is fair, eternal warning of this life.
Cast upon my mouth the words, the spell of song
and talk, so that bewitched till death, the breath I
give and take is laden with music, forgiven by the
tales.

Jo Sinclair

BREAD

Whatever bread and wine are given,
Your hands may cut that rudest of the loaves
Your hands may tip the crudest earthen bowl
And pour that red, and store that strength
Within the cup.

Whatever food and drink are proffered,
Yours be the store of words offered
With homely sustenance, yours the glance
Of compassion to salt this shining bread.

Jo Sinclair

THESE CITIES

The cities of our mind have ceased to live.
We are confronted by half-ruined towers,
We stare into the depths of cobwebbed doorways
To seek the dead, to seek the unread books,
To smell the week-old flowers, the unmade bed.

The cities of our heart are obsolete.
In demanding sight, we were given vision
And a full share of tears; we were told the years
Are beautiful and dull as your dreams, and that
The schemes of men are meaningless.
So listening, we went to the cities
To find or make a deeper music.
We found the cities dead, we made no song.

Jo Sinclair

MOON

These be the hours and years in us,
these be youth's passing,
and beauty came of age and grace.

These be the angers we drink like wine,
the fine, unearthly poisons,
the healing drink, the wild blood
stealing back at last to quiet,
the corrupt flesh retrieved.

These be the sorrows and loves
maudlin as youth: the moon cried for,
the stars died for, and gone now,
the young voice gone
out of the garden in summer night
the wild, bright eyes taken,
the wild bright rhymes shaken
from word to word.

Jo Sinclair

SONNETS

VOICES

Hear them connive, the lusty profiteers,
over their wines, their succulent cigars.
Hear how the patriots, waving their stars
and bloody stripes, rouse a dense mob to cheers.
Hear how old statesmen parley with old peers
about advancing hordes of men from Mars.
Listen to madmen, forcing feeble bars.
Hear how a world echoes to whispered fears.

There is another Voice on earth; less loud,
less penetrant to crowds in current years:
"They of the sword shall perish by the sword!"
Pleading reminder for the deaf and proud,
unmindful yet of bloodborn future tears,
It sings of love, and peace, in a lost chord.

Barbara Bradley

LOVE'S CONQUEST

When first I gave her signal of my love
She quivered like a tightened viol - string,
Which at the master's sure and reverent touch
Responds and trembles and begins to sing;
And when I dared to take her in my arms,
Ah, she was like a humming - bird in flight...
(How could I know a kiss would frighten her?)
To me her trembling shyness spelled delight.
But now she has grown quiet to my touch,
With quietude as fixed as that of stars;
Still as the willows on a windless day.
Now like a wild thing made aware of bars
She has surrendered all her will to mine.
Her heart now answers mine with steady beat,
Yet often in the night I ask myself
If love's last triumph may be love's defeat!

Marietta R. Clarke

THE MYSTIC

There is a love that answers human call,
That nestles comfortingly in the night;
But this fair love that holds my soul in thrall
Is but a vision, exquisite with light!
You speak of a rejoicing in the flesh
That stirs you with intoxicating bliss..
Do you not know that sense can weave a mesh
Within the boundaries of a single kiss?
Too fair my love to touch, too high to know
Except as Spirit always knows its own;
In passion's ground I had no need to sow.
I found my love miraculously grown.
So you may have your portion of red wine;
The spirit's rare ambrosia is mine!

Marietta R. Clarke

SPRING MUST PASS

The fields of York shall lie forever still
And golden in the sunshine, and the curled
Lake Keuka's silver shall reflect the hill
Above it always. Nothing in the world
Can change these things that I am leaving now
And when, some night long years away, I wake
From dreams of yellow wheat or silver plow,
I shall be lonely, lonely for the sake
Of Keuka, amber in the dusk; of night
That dropped a cloak about the town; of flowers
That flamed; the lake a melody of light;
Of memory-laden days and silver hours.
I shall not see again these hills, this grass,
I spent here but a spring, and springs must pass.

Marian K. Hendrix
(reprinted)

AND FIND IT GONE

These leaves that now are flame and green and rust
Fling up their scarlet madness to the sky
In gaudy challenge to the quiet dust.
That is their end and their fulfillment. You and I
Who walk here now will soon return and find
All of the challenge gone, and hilltops where
Great flames of beauty burned and color lined
The sky, empty and cold and branches bare,
Bereft of life. One day we shall stand here
Watching the bitter hillside. In your eyes
Despair and sorrow. Watching, I know fear
And feel my kinness with these skies;
Dreading as they do that November dawn
When we shall search for beauty . . . that has gone.

Marian K. Hendrix

SONNET

That time when all my joy lived in your name,
I sometimes thought to pause awhile apart
And make a song to beauty whence it came--
The gently springing laughter of your heart.

I would have said in such a tender hour:
O hold me lightly in your bounty, Lord,
And stay me at the threshold, else the power
To love will wound as cruel as any sword.

That time is past. We made an end of pain
With words that were not wholly brave. The bright
Dear face of gladness was not seen again,
For even tears could not renew our sight.

Though you were lost, this love was of such kind,
The thought of you lies treasured in my mind.

William Hutchins

SONNET FOR THE LIVING

None but the brave can meet the faint surmise
Of never-ending night with quiet eyes;
None but the brave can greet the still surprise
That writes HIC JACET where the body lies.

The weakly-tempered man who makes his boast
To go rose-crowned in darkness, spits on life,
And hopes to make a bargain for his ghost
By stirring hell into immortal strife.

And those who think to hold inviolate
The passion, blood, and errant thought of man,
For them the love of death is turned to hate;
They hide their fear beneath a higher plan.

Who gives to all, none thank. None but the brave
Accept the cold, dark comfort of the grave.

William Hutchins

SONNET

The sleeping woman, freed from love has curled
Her tendrils of affection round herself
And lies in beauty lost to me, a world
That mirrors now no shadow of myself.

But a moment past she held me as
The earth in need holds rivers to her breast.
Mine was her joy; her fierce intention was
To prison me, her chiefest source and best.

Now she sleeps and she is free again,
Free of the mortal storm. Nameless, she lies
Within my arms, free of the maddening rain.
Lonely as a cloud, I kiss her eyes

To call her back to love, and mine the pain
To hear the sadness in her wakening sighs.

William Hutchins

LOVE

To those who have loved ardently and long
Life speaks in stronger accents -- murmuring
The lost and broken whisper of a song --
The sudden, bright awakening of spring.
And soon the words grow clear, and unison
Will mark the melody that slowly gains,
Blending two kindred entities in one
Till silently love's golden summer wanes.....
But still the song goes on, undimmed and clear
Sounding the note that lingers over all --
A sweeter chord that seems to come more near
Bringing the sweet remembrance of the Fall
At last the song becomes a lullaby
With snows of Winter drifting from on high...

James Liotta

